

Dear Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Jenna Bergmann. I am from New Haven, Connecticut and I am a student in the Medical Scientist Training Program at Yale as well as a community organizer for Tight Lipped.

I am testifying in support of raised House Bill 6617, An Act Promoting Equity in Coverage for Fertility Health Care. This bill addresses a critical public health need by eliminating barriers to fertility care and ensuring that all Connecticut residents have equitable access to the reproductive health care they need to build their families.

As a medical student, a researcher, and a patient suffering from pelvic floor dysfunction likely caused by endometriosis, I have many personal connections to this issue. I am grateful to be a graduate student at Yale University where my health insurance covers treatment for my condition. My husband and I are currently planning our family around our insurance coverage, knowing that it is unlikely we will ever have these benefits again under the current laws. As a medical student, I have also participated in the care of patients with infertility. I have experienced great moral injury when my team is able to refer a wealthy patient to the services they need in order to have a child, but a patient with the same exact diagnosis who lives in a different area code cannot be helped because they have neither private insurance nor financial resources to pay out of pocket. I am working as a scientific researcher to help understand causes of infertility in endometriosis and attempt to find new treatments, but it is only law makers who have the power today to expand access to fertility care in my community and in Connecticut as a whole.

30-50% of people with endometriosis also have infertility. Further, 35% of women with vaginismus cannot conceive without medical intervention. Including treatments such as pelvic floor physical therapy in their insurance coverage could ultimately save the healthcare system money, as more patients would be able to conceive without expensive assistive reproductive technologies such as IVF if they are adequately treated for their underlying condition. **As someone researches, participates in the treatment of, and herself suffers from a pelvic pain condition that constitute a barrier to conceiving and bearing children, I strongly support coverage of these conditions as a form of fertility treatment.**

The fight for reproductive choice has to include the power to decide when and how to start a family. For far too long, we've allowed poor people, disabled people, queer people, and people of color to run into barriers when they try to exercise their reproductive autonomy. Connecticut is a national leader in protecting reproductive rights and keeping LGBTQ+ families secure, and it is time for our laws on fertility care to catch-up. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Jenna Bergmann

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenna Bergmann". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Organizer, Tight Lipped
MD/PhD Student, Yale Medical School